

THE INDYPENDENT

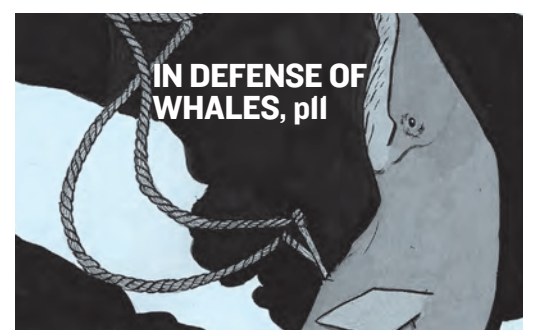
Issue #149, March 31 – April 20, 2010
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

Nuclear Shock

While Obama touts nuclear power as a green energy solution, Southwest communities resist uranium mining boom.

BY KLEE BENALLY AND JESSICA LEE, PAGE 8

NONA HILDEBRAND
NONAMEDFACE.COM





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The Independent is a New York-based free newspaper published 16 times a year on Wednesdays to our print and online readership of more than 200,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 650 citizen journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Independent* is dedicated to empowering people to create a true alternative to the corporate press by encouraging people to produce their own media. *The Independent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

The Independent is affiliated with the New York City Independent Media Center, which is part of the global Indymedia movement, an international network that is dedicated to fostering grassroots media production, and to *IndyKids*, a children's newspaper. NYC IMC is an open publishing website where anyone can publish news (nyc.indymedia.org.)

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community calendar

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MON APRIL 5

7pm • \$10
SCREENING: COFFEE AND CONSUMPTION. From the Ground Up, directed by Su Friedrich, examines every phase of coffee production: growing, picking, processing, distribution, brewing and selling. Maysles Institute, 343 Lenox Ave 212-582-6050 • mayslesinstitute.org

WED APRIL 14

7:30pm-10pm • \$6/\$10/\$15 sliding scale
CONVERSATION: "AUTHENTIC JOURNALISM AS CIVIC RESISTANCE." Founded 10 years ago by Al Giordano, Narco News is a vital news source from Latin America. Brecht Forum, 451 West St 212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

TUE APRIL 6

7pm • Free
DISCUSSION: CENSORSHIP. Banning books, newspapers and magazines is censorship. This discussion will focus on overturning the ban on Revolution newspaper at Pelican Bay State Prison in California and Menard Prison in Illinois, as well as prisons nationwide. Revolution Books, 146 W 26th St 212-691-3345 • revolutionbooksnyc.org

THU APRIL 8

7pm • Free
PANEL: "A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS." Daniel Ellsberg, Jonathan Schell and Kennette Benedict will discuss the struggle to contain and reduce the number of nuclear weapons, and how President Obama and Congress can be pushed to achieve that goal. The discussion, to be moderated by Phil Donahue, is presented by the Peace Action Fund of New York State and The Nation Institute. New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W 64th St 212-874-5210 • nysec.org

SAT APRIL 10

10am-4pm
E-WASTE RECYCLING: Drop-off old TV sets, printers, computers, radios, cell phones, disks, wires, and iPods. Sponsored by Lower East Side Ecology Center and Tekserve. 119 W 23rd St • lesecologycenter.org 212-477-4022

THU APRIL 15

6:15pm • Free
SEMINAR: "ELLISON, OBAMA, KING, AND THE AMERICAN DREAM." UCLA professor Eric Sundquist will deliver this year's Lionel Trilling Seminar. The Heyman Center for the Humanities, Shapiro Center, 530 W 120 St 212-854-8443 • heymancenter.org

7pm-8pm • Free

READING: A THOUSAND SISTERS. Lisa Shannon's new book, *A Thousand Sisters: My Journey into the Worst Place on Earth to Be a Woman*, records her experiences traveling and raising money in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she started the organization Run for Congo Women. Strand Book Store, 828 Broadway 212-473-1452 • strandbooks.com

7:30 pm • \$6/\$10/\$15 sliding scale

BOOK PARTY: ELLA BAKER. Barbara Ransby's new biography of Ella Baker covers the influential civil rights leader's career as an organizer, intellectual and teacher. Brecht Forum, 451 West St 212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

FRI APRIL 16

6pm-8pm • \$5 suggested donation
WORKSHOP: "KNOW YOUR RIGHTS ABOUT MEDICAL DECISION-MAKING!" On National Healthcare Decisions Day, attorneys will be present to answer questions about healthcare decision-making rights and to help complete and notarize forms for powers of attorney, living wills and healthcare proxies. LGBT Center, 208 W 13th St, 101 Kaplan Assembly Hall 212-620-7310 • gaycenter.org

SAT APRIL 17

11am-7pm • Free
FOURTH ANNUAL ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR: Anarchists and the generally "anarcho-curious" are invited. Features



RADICALGRAPHICS.ORG

books, zines, pamphlets, art, film and the opportunity to connect. Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq South anarchistbookfair.net

SUN APRIL 18

1 pm • \$12
PERFORMANCE: REVEREND BILLY AND THE CHURCH OF STOP SHOPPING MOUNTAINTOP REVIVAL to protest the destructive mining practice of mountaintop removal. There will be preaching by Reverend Billy and gospel music performed by the Mountaintop Gospel Choir. Highline Ballroom, 431 W 16th St revbilly.com

WED APRIL 21

7pm-9pm • \$5 suggested donation
THEATER: OF MICE AND MEN. There will be a performance of *Of Mice and Men*, followed by a group discussion of the ethical issues presented in the play, adapted from the John Steinbeck novel. Wine and cheese reception at 6:30 pm. New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W 64th St, Elliot Library, Rm 507 212-874-5210 • nysec.org

7:15 PM • Free

LECTURE: RACISM AND THE DEATH PENALTY. The Campaign to End the Death Penalty is on a national tour that examines the link between the death penalty and lynching in the U.S. Speakers will include activists, scholars and former prisoners. City College, 160 Convent Ave, NAC 1/203 cedptour.blogspot.com

FRI APRIL 23 & SAT APRIL 24

All day • Free
FESTIVAL: EARTHFAR OUTDOORS.

Celebrate Earth Day at this two-day festival that will be held on Vanderbilt Ave. with music, art, exhibits, education and organic food. Grand Central Terminal, 87 E 42nd St • earthdayny.org

SAT APRIL 24

10am-4pm • Free
TEACH-IN: "HEALTHCARE REFORM: YES WE CAN DO BETTER!" In the wake of inadequate healthcare reform legislation, Private Health Insurance Must Go! presents the third annual teach-in and summit on healthcare. There will be speakers from PHIMG, Healthcare-Now!, Physicians for a National Health Program and other groups. St. Luke's Hospital Auditorium, 1111 Amsterdam Ave • phimg.org

12pm-4pm • Free

CELEBRATION: GETGREEN SOUTH BRONX EARTH FEST. There will be music and entertainment at this outdoor celebration of the environment and community. Learn about recycling, sustainability and other issues. St. Mary's Park, E 146th St, Bronx facebook.com/GetGreenSouthBronx-EarthFest

SUN APRIL 25

1pm-5pm • Free
CELEBRATION: EARTH DAY. This year marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. Activities at this event will include catch-and-release fishing, underwater video exploration, a mobile museum, recycling and kite flying, as well as food and live music. IKEA/Erie Basin Waterfront Park, 145 Columbia St., Bklyn 347-224-5828 • earthdayny.org

reader comments

Post your own comments online at the end of each article or e-mail letters@indypendent.org

ART AS A CATALYST

Response to "Through the Lens: A New Exploration of New York," March 10:

Thank you for presenting these very important shows documenting the changing dynamics of New York City. At this point, I believe art is the only way left to create the change that we have been looking for. These exhibitions will hopefully serve as a catalyst for the art community to take control of their power. —LAURIE CUMBO

ABORTION DEBATE EQUALITY

Responses to "'Not Our Kind': Responding to the Black anti-

abortion Movement," March 10: While I'm pro-choice, I see no reason why black pro-lifers can't make their views known as well. They are as much a part of Black America as anyone else. I'm open to having a debate within Black America about abortion, an issue which reasonable people can certainly disagree. Given polls which show split opinion in Black America on abortion, Loretta Ross' group does not "speak for Black women" any more than the black pro-lifers. —SHAY

NYPD COWBOYS

Response to "NYPD Memoir Expose: A Review of NYPD Confidential," March 10:

While I dug both the review and the book, I have one small quibble. It's not entirely true

that the Street Crime Unit was simply re-named. As Leonard Levitt details in his book, NYPD Confidential, the city-wide Street Crime Unit was, in fact, disbanded post-Diallo, and all the cops on it promoted to detective. What replaced the Street Crime Unit was precinct by precinct "anti-crime" teams, which go around in street clothes looking for trouble and collars. Precinct anti-crime teams are way more supervisor-heavy if there's no anti-crime sergeant on duty. Officers who do routine patrol in uniform and generally far less-prone to "cowboy" behavior. —MATT

SHAKEN YOUTH FIND STABILITY

Response to "Haitian Students Find Local Safety Net: An Interview with Flanbwayan Director



Darnell Benoit," March 10: Helping young students pick up where they had to leave because of earthquake is admirable, especially in case of those youth who have relatives that lost their lives or were seriously wounded. —HARBANS SINGH

GROWING A DIVERSE FOOD MOVEMENT

An Interview with Karen Washington

BY JEFF FREIDRICH

Karen Washington, a long-time food justice activist and president of the New York City Community Garden Coalition, is hard at work on her most recent project — working with a broad coalition of groups to organize New York City's first Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference at Brooklyn College this November.

The coalition raised \$3,000 at a fundraising kick-off event last month and is hosting a community forum for black farmers and urban gardeners April 10. *The Independent's* Jeff Friedrich sat down with Washington to discuss food justice, junk food and getting young people of color involved in urban farming.

JEFF FRIEDRICH: *What does food justice mean to you?*

KAREN WASHINGTON: Just like the Constitution says that everyone has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I think human beings have the right to food that is healthy, local and grown without chemicals, and I think that's a right for every human being. However, what you see is that in terms of food that is healthy, it is predominantly available in affluent neighborhoods, whereas if you look in poor, low-income neighborhoods, the quality of the food is very poor and the food itself costs a lot more.

JF: *Could you talk about the connection between health and the environment, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods?*

KW: Young people are hooked on processed food. When they go to the grocery store they never stop and think about whose hands have touched that particular crop, what has been placed on it in terms of pesticides — those questions are not asked. We are starting to see the health-related problems of diabetes, heart disease and cancer. You have kids who are eight, nine, 10, who are suffering from diabetes and obesity. Twenty or 30 years ago, that was unheard of.

JF: *What are the goals of the upcoming Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference?*

KW: We want to really try to engage people of color in this urban agriculture farm movement, because, at this point in time we're not there — we're far from there. We're being talked about in terms of statistics. People men-



ROOTED: Karen Washington is president of the New York City Community Garden Coalition and lead organizer of the Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference that will be held in November. Conference supporters hope to encourage more young people of color to get involved in urban farming. PHOTO: NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

tion health problems in low-income neighborhoods and people of color, but when it comes to the actual solutions, we're not there, we're not making the decisions that impact our community. So what we want to do for this conference is have the black community sit down, analyze exactly what's going on and analyze what's wrong and what's right, so that we can be a part of what's happening in this sustainable agriculture and urban farming movement.

JF: *Why now?*

KW: If we're talking about sustainable agriculture, and I look in the audience and don't see people that look like me or people of color, then I have to step back — and a lot of people are starting to step back — and say, "Wait a minute, there's a group of people missing." So now is the time to really stir up the interest that black people should have in urban agriculture and the impact that we have as consumers.

JF: *Are you seeing more young people of color getting interested in food and climate change issues?*

KW: No. I don't see that. That's part of why we're having this conference. I still see that, for people of color, the stigma of working on

the land, the stigma with slavery, is deeply entrenched in the black community, and that's something we want to talk about. Right now, the black youth, they're not involved in the food movement, and we need to dispel the myths that go along with farming and get them on board.

JF: *In order to improve access to healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods the city recently launched the FRESH initiative (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health), which will provide financial and zoning incentives to supermarkets that locate in underserved areas of the city. What do you think of this policy effort?*

KW: Everyone should be entitled to affordable produce — I'm in agreement with that. But what I would like to see is a partnership with local organizations, because sometimes the ideas are good, but they don't incorporate the people in the community to bring that project together. What happens is that you have these initiatives that are top-down, rather than being inclusive or bottom-up.

For more information about the Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference, visit blackfarmersconf.org.

Judge Blocks Controversial School Closings

BY JAISAL NOOR

On March 26, New York State Supreme Court Judge Joan B. Lobis reversed a controversial decision to shut down 19 New York City public schools. The ruling, in response to a lawsuit jointly filed by the United Federation of Teachers and the NAACP, came two months to the day after Mayor Michael Bloomberg's handpicked schoolboard approved the closures.

In the sharply worded ruling, Lobis wrote that the Panel for Education Policy carried out "significant violations of the Education Law" by ignoring outspoken opposition to the school closings. Further, Lobis wrote, the Department of Education (DOE) "appeared to trivialize the whole notion of community involvement in decisions regarding the closing or phasing out of schools."

This decision is the first of its kind since the state legislature renewed Bloomberg's control of the city's public school system last summer. The ruling mandates that the DOE submit Educational Impact Statements and hold public hearings before closing or relocating schools.

David Bloomfield, a Brooklyn College professor of education, law and policy, commented on gothamschools.org that the ruling "will be difficult to overturn on appeal," because "the decision is squarely based on facts admitted by both parties and established law about Environmental Impact Statements."

However, there are still concerns about the extent to which Judge Lobis' decision will actually loosen Bloomberg's grasp on public schools.

Seung Ok, a teacher at Maxwell High School in East New York, Brooklyn, one of the 19 schools slated for closure, said he is cautiously optimistic about the decision.

"This gives us a chance to mobilize further and get the word out that the DOE does break laws, but it does not try to support the schools," Ok said, who is also an organizer with the Grassroots Education Movement, a citywide network of teachers and parents that has protested the closings.

According to Leonie Haimson, executive director of the educational advocacy group Class Size Matters, while the ruling does require the DOE to conduct more thorough Educational Impact Statements, once it receives Panel for Education approval on a decision, there is nothing to stop the DOE from closing more schools — or opening new ones.

"A more independent Panel for Educational Policy and making DOE subject to city law are important checks and balances that should have been incorporated into the law. In the end, if they clean up the public process, it will slow them down, but they will likely get to the same end," Haimson said.

The DOE still plans to open 15 new, smaller schools in the buildings of the schools that were slated to begin to be phased out this fall.

Closing large public schools and opening smaller, often privately run charter schools, has been a centerpiece of Bloomberg's educational agenda, with the DOE closing 91 schools since he was granted direct control of the city's school system in 2002.

The closings, which would affect 13,000 students, primarily targeted schools in people-of-color neighborhoods.

DREAM WALKERS

TEXT AND PHOTO BY JAISAL NOOR

Daniella Hidalgo, right, will begin a walk from New York City to Washington, D.C., starting April 10 to bring attention to the challenges facing undocumented youth and their families.

Hidalgo, 23, will be joined by three other members of the New York State Youth Leadership Council: Jose Luis Zacatelco, 29, and Gabriel

Martinez, 27, who are both undocumented; and Martin Lopez, 22. They plan to arrive in D.C. on May 1 for the large immigrants rights rally.

They will advocate a moratorium on deportations of undocumented families as well as the passage of the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would establish a path to citizenship for undocumented youth.



Bed-Stuy Med Volunteers Step Up in Haiti

By JON GERBERG

Within 48 hours after the Jan. 12 earthquake hit Haiti, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corp had already gathered \$30,000 worth of supplies and registered 200 volunteers to travel there as part of the relief effort.

“I’m leaving behind all my bills, all my family, and I had a whole team to worry about,” said Chief Colin Raeburn, who led the group’s relief effort in Haiti. “I thought, ‘What the hell am I getting myself into?’”

Since the group’s founding in 1988, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corp (BSVAC) has trained more than 2,000 first responders and hundreds of emergency medical technicians (EMTs). With no paid staff or formal fundraising structure, BSVAC is used to making the most out of meager resources through a combination of hard work, thrift and faith.

After putting the word out far and wide that BSVAC was headed to Haiti to assist aid efforts, Commander and BSVAC Founder Rocky Robinson received a call from the Church of Scientology offering 44 seats in a private plane traveling to Haiti. Volunteers armed with trauma bags, candies and water immediately left for Haiti Jan. 16.

Since then, BSVAC has sent 139 volunteers and about \$50,000 worth of supplies to Haiti. The latest group left March 26 and another contingent is preparing to leave in mid-April. While their work initially focused on providing emergency medical care, they are now working on long-term projects such as rebuilding a local hospital, helping orphans and creating a Haitian volunteer ambulance service. So far, they have assisted some 6,000 patients.

Over the last 22 years, the Corps has become a fixture of the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in Brooklyn. Robinson, and fellow EMT Joe Perez, started the group as an alternative to the city ambulance service, whose emergency response time in 1987 — during the height of the city’s drug epidemic — averaged as high as 30 minutes in the neighborhood, Robinson said.

Without an ambulance, let alone volunteers, they operated out of an abandoned building, responding to emergency dispatches

on foot with oxygen tanks strapped to their backs and recruiting volunteers throughout the neighborhood. Since then, the group has expanded its services to include first responder and EMT training, in addition to ambulance services, and has participated in relief efforts after 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina.

Tamsin Wolf, a lawyer who has worked with BSVAC since 1988, sums up the experience of working with the corps:

“I’ve worked with a lot of nonprofits, but I’ve never been in a situation that is so elementally clear. If there is something to do, you need to do it,” Wolf said.

HEADED TO HAITI

Gardel Prudent, a Haitian-American florist who lives in Fort Greene and works with BSVAC, left Haiti to come to the United States when he was only 13 years old — and he never thought that he would return to a country so changed.

“My heart is still bleeding from what I saw in Haiti,” said Prudent, who went to Haiti with BSVAC’s first contingent in January. He described the garbage lining the streets and flushing into rivers and the foreign bulldozers and dump trucks parked for days outside the city while Haitians searched the rubble for relatives.

Since the earthquake, more than \$1.5 billion in international aid has been sent to Haiti, yet much-needed supplies have been slow to arrive.

So far 700,000 tents and tarps have been distributed to 1.3 million displaced Haitians, according to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. UNICEF has estimated that 250,000 of those displaced are children.

BSVAC nurse Luna Charles, who returned at the end of March from a recent trip to Haiti, says that with the rainy season beginning as early as April, and the hurricane season set to start in June, aid workers are worried about flooding and other forms of extreme weather.

“If you go to the tent cities you’ll see that half of the families have tents, and half are just improvising, using the sheets, plastic and cardboard,” Charles said.

Charles is currently working to establish an orphanage for displaced children in Haiti.



HAITI BOUND: Chief Colin Raeburn meets the second Bedford-Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corp contingent at the Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Port-au-Prince Jan. 23. The 24 volunteer-member team help unload medical supplies, food and water. The team arrived eager to get to work, but had been forced to leave half of their supply stock in New York City due to weight restrictions for travel. PHOTO: MICHAEL KIRBY SMITH

BSVAC’s ultimate goal is to help Haitian citizens establish a volunteer corps of their own, where Haitians will be trained as first responders and will eventually be able to train each other.

Charles has already signed up more than 900 Haitians who are eager to join.

“The whole purpose of our organization is to save a life. And that’s all we want to practice, in whatever state, in whatever country we go to,” Charles said.

RELIEF ON A SHOESTRING

Already saddled with the cost of supporting 11 BSVAC members currently on the ground in Haiti, the corps has been forced to postpone sending over \$5,000 in supplies due to lack of funds.

While the BSVAC has worked with groups like the Red Cross and the William J. Clinton Foundation on the ground in Haiti — which have raised \$369 million and \$14 million, respectively — BSVAC has sustained its Haiti operations on little more than \$40,000 over the past few months.

Out of more than a dozen volunteer corps in the tri-state area contacted for this article, including ambulance groups in Park Slope and Forest Hills, no other volunteer ambulance corps in the New York City area has sent volunteers directly to Haiti.

In the meantime, BSVAC continues to rely on small donations and a committed group of volunteers to sustain its efforts both in Bedford-Stuyvesant and abroad.

Robinson, who will turn 70 this June, identifies with the challenges the Haitian people face.

“When I started this ambulance corps, I didn’t have an ambulance. I didn’t have volunteers, so I equate myself with the Haitian people,” Robinson said. “They have to start from nothing, too. What are they going to do? Wait there for someone else to come and give them a new life? No. You’ve got to do it yourself.”

For more information about BSVAC, or to donate or volunteer, visit bsvac.org or call 718-453-4617



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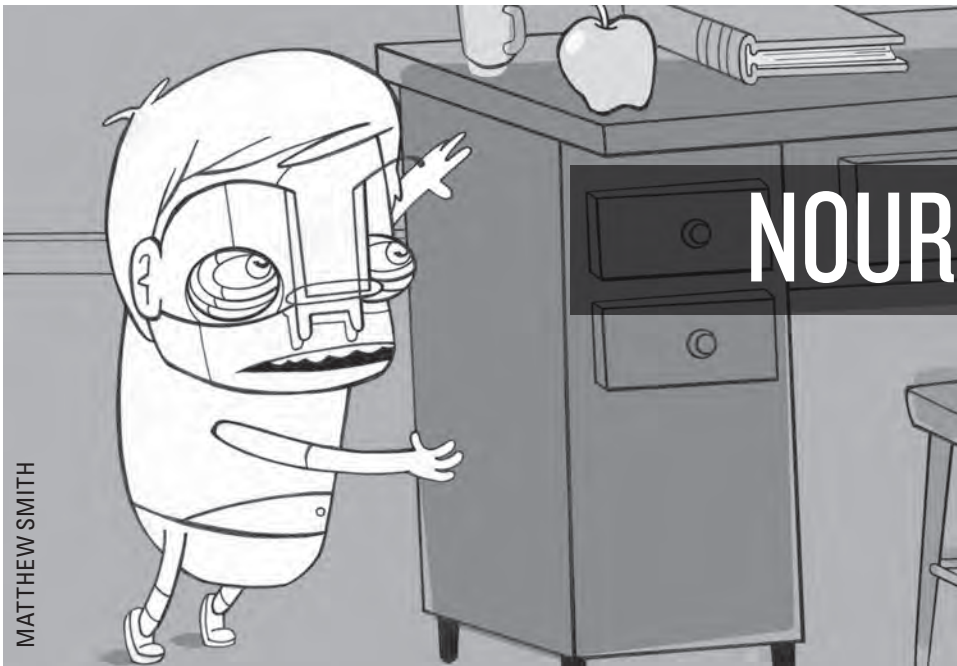
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MATTHEW SMITH

NOURISHING OUR YOUTH

BY JEFF FRIEDRICH

A New York City coalition of more than 80 anti-hunger, food justice and child welfare organizations have come together to push for increased funding for the Child Nutrition Act — a bill that funds a range of nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

The NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) is campaigning for a \$4 billion annual funding increase for the Child Nutrition Act, which is currently up in Congress for a five-year renewal.

Last year, President Barack Obama proposed a \$1 billion annual increase in spending for the Child Nutrition Act, while the Senate Agriculture Committee voted March 25 to support Sen. Blanche Lincoln's (D-

AK) Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which calls for a \$4.5 billion increase over 10 years. Neither proposal comes close to the alliance's goal.

"For months, anti-hunger organizations, parents, food advocates, chefs and schools across the country have been drawing attention to the opportunity to feed more kids better food through the Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Congress must respond to these voices and at least meet the president's request for an increase of at least \$1 billion per year," said Kristin Mancinelli, a spokesperson for the NYC Alliance for CNR.

In addition to a significant funding increase, the alliance would also like to see school meals subjected to stricter procurement standards that ensure food is high quality nutritious and supports regional agriculture. They also advocate increased access to federally funded school lunch and

breakfast programs. Further, the group says that the implementation of these changes would help Obama achieve his goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015.

The NYC Alliance for CNR did not exist when the Child Nutrition Act was last reauthorized in 2004. Traditionally, advocacy around child nutrition and WIC has been led by anti-hunger and child welfare groups; now, growing interest in food sustainability has attracted new constituencies to this issue. On March 17, a group of chefs from around the country accompanied the alliance to meet with legislators in Washington, D.C., and a number of environmental and food justice organizations, including Just Food, Sustainable Flatbush, the Brooklyn Food Coalition (BFC) and the United Federation of Teachers Green Schools Committee, have signed on to the alliance.

The membership of the BFC offers insight into how people concerned with food sustainability have become involved in food justice issues.

For some of its members, buying organic was a first step. "Members may join in on the sustainability side, but then they notice that there is also a justice issue involved," said Adriana Velez, BFC's communications coordinator.

Making this connection is essential, Velez says, to improving school lunch funding, es-

pecially for those who do not have reliable access to healthy food.

"A lot of the people who get school lunch are food insecure — they're already living in households where there is a lack of resources. They're living in food deserts — in neighborhoods that do not have easy access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This is their best chance at getting a decent meal for that day, and we're failing miserably."

The alliance has delivered more than 3,000 petitions to New York's federal representatives, yet none of them have publicly endorsed a \$4 billion annual increase. In a recent statement, Rep. Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY) points to the link between school-based food programs and increased school attendance as a reason to support the bill. There are currently more than 860,000 students enrolled in at least one of these programs.

For Jennifer Chapin, a parent and BFC volunteer, the Senate's failure to increase spending is shortsighted.

"It's not remotely surprising, but ironic, considering that perhaps nothing would bring down our long-term national health-care costs more than true reform that made the school lunch system universal, healthy, sustainable and just," Chapin said.

For more information, visit the Brooklyn Food Coalition at brooklynfoodcoalition.org.

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"Be the change you want to see in the world." — Gandhi

Mobilizing for Immigrant Rights

BY JON GERBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In the largest demonstration since President Barack Obama took office, hundreds of thousands of immigrants' rights supporters rallied March 21 in favor of comprehensive immigration reform.

"The message is quite simple: It's time," said Shuya Ohno, deputy communications director for National Immigration Forum, one of more than 500 organizations that helped organize March for America. "The president promised to get immigration reform in the first year ... everybody agrees that the system is broken and needs to be fixed."

Republicans and Democrats alike have acknowledged deep problems with U.S. immigration law for more than a decade, yet have failed to develop a comprehensive plan to overhaul the system. After the nationwide immigration marches in 2006, President George W. Bush pushed for a bill that was held up in the Senate in 2007.

As a result, immigrants have become "a semi-permanent class of illegal workers who will never be able to fully take part in American democracy," said Robert C. Smith, professor of Immigration Studies and Public Affairs at Baruch College and the Graduate Center at City University of New York.

Obama has put strong support behind Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) in adopting a comprehensive blueprint for reform.

"Our plan has four pillars," wrote the senators in a *Washington Post* editorial March 17, "requiring biometric Social Security cards to ensure that illegal workers cannot get jobs; fulfilling and strengthening

our commitments on border security and interior enforcement; creating a process for admitting temporary workers; and implementing a tough but fair path to legalization for those already here."

Their proposal was welcomed by mainstream immigration groups. "It is an important first step," said Co-Executive Director of Make the Road New York Ana Maria Archila and Lillian Rodríguez-López, president of the Hispanic Federation in a joint statement March 19.

Others immediately criticized the plan strongly. "Schumer's comprehensive immigration reform means the continued criminalization of the undocumented," said Teresa Gutierrez, a co-chair of the May 1st Coalition. She spoke during a March 18 demonstration outside Schumer's office at 757 Third Avenue in Manhattan. "We must unite together to end the humiliation and heartache."

"The Democrats and Republicans have created a comprehensive immigration reform plan which provides legalization in exchange for even more punitive policy," said Roberto Lovato, a New York City-based writer and co-founder of Presente.org. "This means jailing more children and families, more raids that terrorize people, and even more accelerated fattening of the already bloated prison system. We're witnessing another very cynical, even sinister game that is being played in D.C."

Deportations increased by 50 percent during Obama's first year in office — from 264,503 to 387,790 — according to Department of Homeland Security statistics cited by the coalition Fair Immigration Reform

Movement.

"This is not sound economic policy or moral policy. This is not leadership nor change we can believe in," said Pramila Jayapal, executive director of OneAmerica.

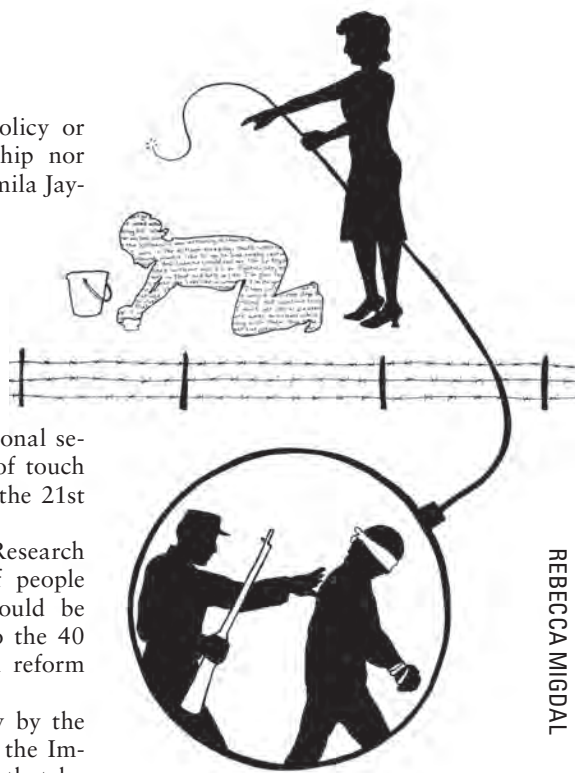
Many are not surprised. "Security after 9/11 has contaminated the way we think about immigration in this country" said Dr. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, co-director of Immigration Studies at New York University. "We're caught in a national security paradigm, and we are out of touch with the realities of citizenship in the 21st century."

According to surveys by the Pew Research Center in January, 83 percent of people polled said that the economy should be Obama's top priority, compared to the 40 percent who felt that immigration reform should head the list.

But a report released in January by the Center for American Progress and the Immigration Policy Center calculates that legalization of America's 12 million undocumented immigrants could bring as much as \$1.5 trillion into the U.S. economy over a 10 year period.

Of the 12 million, at least 8.3 million are active in the U.S. labor force, according to a 2008 study by the Pew Research Center. Immigrant rights advocates assert that the broken immigration system creates a two-tiered labor market that breeds an exploitative work environment.

Unlike current enforcement-only policy, the Center argues, "comprehensive reform would raise the 'wage floor' for the entire



REBECCA MIGDAL

U.S. economy — to the benefit of both immigrant and native-born workers."

"The reality is that immigration reform is about economic recovery," Jayapal said.

"It's a great opportunity right now ... Obama has managed to unify us momentarily, because of how much suffering he has brought on immigrants," Lovato said.

"This is about economic justice, fairness in the workplace, labor rights and racial justice," the National Immigration Forum's Ohno said. "All these issues really speak to a positive vision of what America is supposed to be."

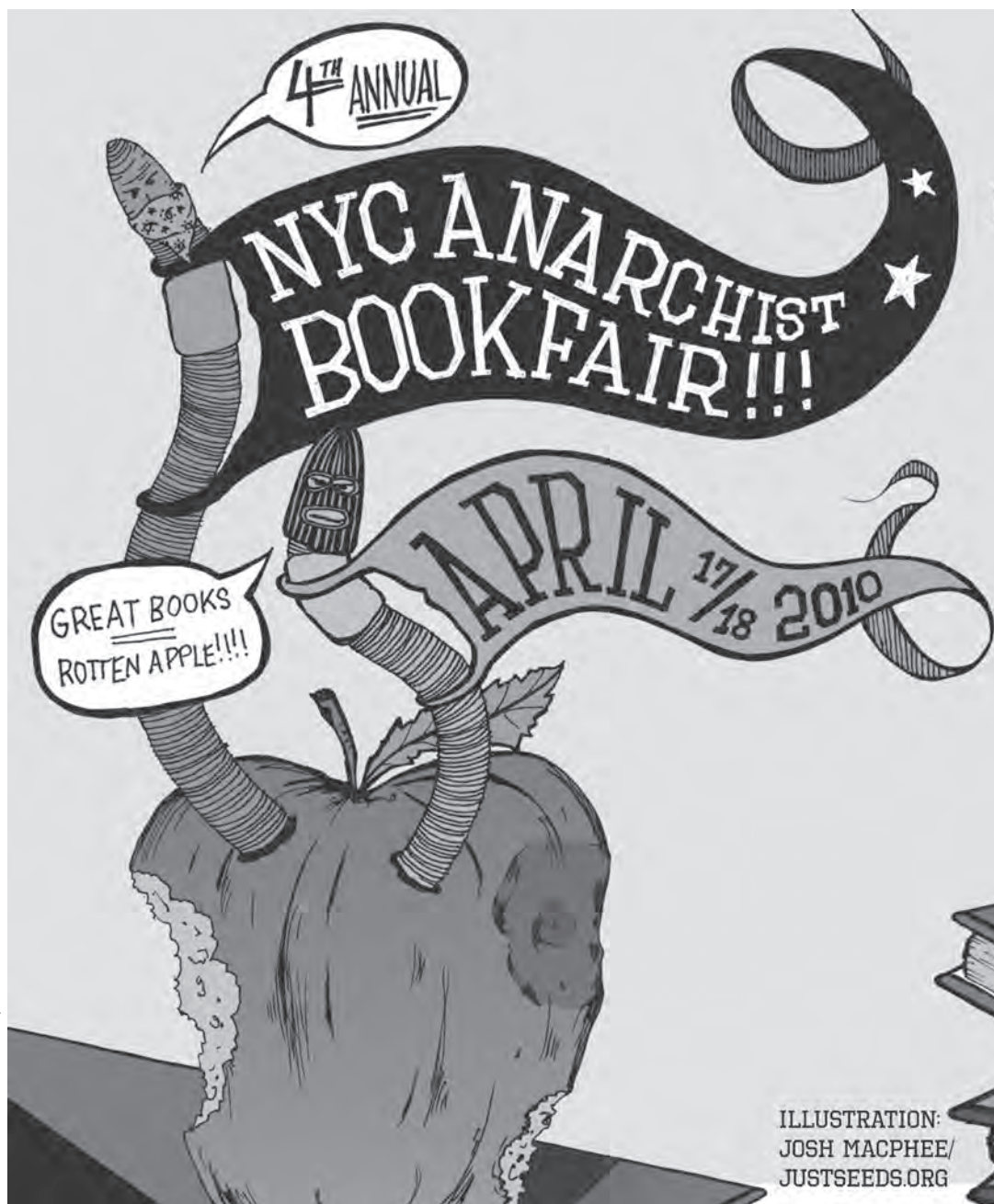


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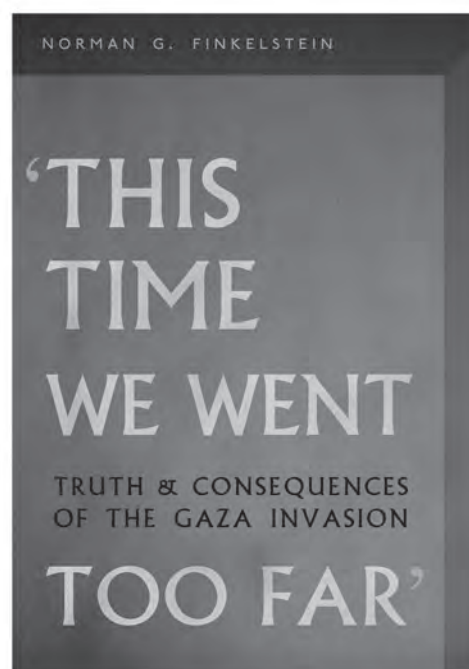
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A must-read for anyone interested in the Israel-Palestine conflict, Norman Finkelstein's new book, "*This Time We Went Too Far*", is a timely and important study of the 2008 Gaza Invasion. As the Israeli government attempts to discredit the UN Goldstone Report on the Gaza assault, Finkelstein offers a gripping account of why Israel attacked, what happened on the ground during the invasion, and the repercussions of the attack in Jewish communities around the world.

Norman G. Finkelstein's books include *Beyond Chutzpah*, *The Holocaust Industry*, *A Nation on Trial* and *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*.

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—RAJA SHEHADEH
author, *Palestinian Walks*

"[FINKELSTEIN'S] PLACE IN THE WHOLE HISTORY OF WRITING HISTORY IS ASSURED."

—RAUL HILBERG
author, *The Destruction of the European Jews*

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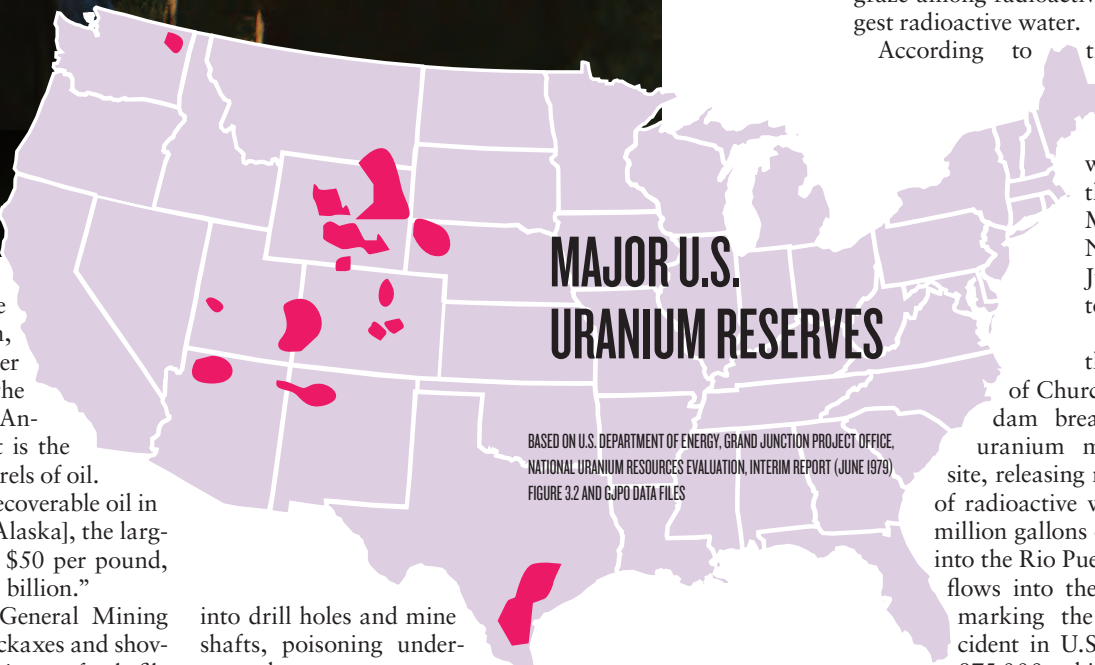
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A new wave of uranium mining threatens Indigenous communities in the Southwest.

RESISTING THE NUCLEAR BOOM

By Klee Benally and Jessica Lee

PRAYER FOR THE LAND: Damon Whatahogamie, a member of the Havasupai Nation who live in the Grand Canyon, leads a sunrise prayer run from Red Butte, a site sacred to the tribe, to the Canyon Uranium Mine, just three miles away. PHOTO: BRENDA NORRELL/CENSORED NEWS



GRAND CANYON, Ariz.—The American Southwest has again become ground zero in the debate about nuclear power.

Since December, miners have resumed crawling deep into the earth on the edge of the Grand Canyon to mine high-grade uranium ore at the Arizona 1 Mine, which had been closed since the late 1980s. Owned by the Canadian Denison Mines Corp., it is the first uranium mine to open in northern Arizona since nuclear power again became a popular idea in Washington within the last decade. The greater Grand Canyon area faces a possible explosion in the number of new uranium mines.

The price of uranium has rebounded in recent years due to a surge in reactor construction throughout the world and thanks to political support from the White House, starting with George W. Bush and reinforced by Barack Obama. The price has varied from \$10 to \$138 per pound since 2001, and is currently valued at \$41.25 per pound.

More than 8,000 uranium mine claims have been filed in northern Arizona, an increase from 110 in 2003 — a rate seen across the West. The area’s sedimentary rock layer called breccia pipes, which exists up to 1,800 feet below the surface, is the most concentrated source of uranium known in the United States.

According to the *Arizona Daily Sun*, Denison plans on operating four days per week, extracting 335 tons of uranium ore per day. The hazardous ore will be hauled by truck more than 300 miles through towns and rural communities to the company’s White Mesa mill located near Blanding, Utah, where it will be processed into “yellowcake” (refined uranium ore to make uranium oxide) and then sold.

A coalition of environmental groups filed a lawsuit last November to stop the opening of the mine, alleging that the legally required documents were outdated and did not offer protections required by contemporary environmental laws. While the lawsuit is pending, the Bureau of Land Management and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality say the mine is properly authorized.

In response to growing concern about the pending mining boom in northern Arizona, U.S. Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar called for a “two-year time-out” last summer to allow federal agencies to complete a two-year environmental review before authorizing new

mining claims within the one million acres on federal lands near the Grand Canyon. Existing claims, such as Denison’s mine, were exempt from the temporary moratorium.

Environmentalists and local Indigenous communities hope that after the review in February 2011, Salazar will make the area unavailable for new mining claims for the a maximum 20-year period allowed by the Interior Department. Meanwhile, the U.S. House of Representatives is considering the Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act (H.R. 644), legislation that would permanently protect the one million acres on federal land from new mining claims — creating a five-mile buffer zone of around Grand Canyon National Park.

However, Arizona’s Department of Mines and Mineral Resources Director Madan M. Singh is just one of many who oppose the ban. Testifying to a U.S. House subcommittee hearing in July 2009, he said that mining in the Grand Canyon region is necessary for worldwide power needs.

Citing U.S. Geological Survey estimates, Singh said that the ban would keep approximately 375 million pounds of yellowcake in

the ground, which “at the present rate of generation, could replace all the power generated by coal plants in the United States for a decade. Another way to look at this: it is the equivalent of 13.3 billion barrels of oil. That is the total amount of recoverable oil in the Prudhoe Bay oilfield [in Alaska], the largest in the U.S. At a price of \$50 per pound, this resource is worth \$18.75 billion.”

Under the anachronistic General Mining Act of 1872, created when pickaxes and shovels were used, mining companies can freely file claims on federal public lands. The law permits mining regardless of cultural impacts on Indigenous tribes. Additionally, no royalties have to be paid to the taxpayers in exchange for extracting riches from public lands.

A SACRED CANYON

The Grand Canyon is the ancestral homeland to the Havasupai Nation. The Nation has battled uranium interests for decades and banned mining on their lands as early as 1991. However, their lands are surrounded largely by federal lands under the jurisdiction of the

Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service — agencies that all have the power to authorize new mines.

The Colorado River is held sacred by more than 30 Indigenous nations. It emerges in the Rocky Mountains in north-central Colorado and winding 1,450 miles to the Gulf of California, the Colorado River and provides drinking water for up to 27 million people in seven states throughout the Southwest.

Drilling for the radioactive material in previous decades has been found to contaminate underground aquifers that drain into the Colorado River and sacred springs that have sustained Indigenous peoples in the region. Surface water can also flow

into drill holes and mine shafts, poisoning underground water sources.

The 600 members of the Havasupai Tribe, who live at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, are concerned that future mining nearby could contaminate water sources and further desecrate sacred sites, including Red Butte, which is located three miles away from the closed Canyon Uranium Mine. Denison indicates that it is also interested in reopening the mine.

Some 300 people joined a rally at the South Rim of the Grand Canyon last August to support protecting the butte, known as Wíí Gdwiisa, or “clenched fist mountain.”

“As the ‘guardians of the Grand Canyon,’ we strenuously object to mining for uranium here,” said Matthew Putesoy, vice chairman of the Havasupai Nation, to reporter Brenda Norrell. “It is a threat to the health of our environment and tribe, our tourism-based economy and our religion.”

“We’re fighting to save our sacred Red Butte and our only source of water, now that Denison Mines has begun uranium mining on the North Rim,” said Carletta Tilousi, a Havasupai Tribal Council member, in *Indian Country Today* March 26.

THE URANIUM LEGACY

Communities living in the arid southwest plateaus are still suffering from the consequences of the 20th-century uranium boom from the 1940s to late 1980s which fueled the nuclear weapons program and the first wave of nuclear power plants.

The tragic legacy is the contamination and illness that remains. Today, there are more than 2,000 abandoned uranium mines in the Southwest, and the U.S. government and private companies have done little or nothing to clean up contaminated sites and abandoned mines.

Throughout the Diné (Navajo) Nation east of

the Grand Canyon, families have been subject to decades of health effects due to past unsafe mining conditions and living near to mines and mills, in some cases even living in houses built from uranium tailings. Nearly four million tons of uranium ore were extracted from some 500 mines on Diné lands.

At Rare Metals mine near Tuba City on the Diné Nation, a layer of soil and rock is the only material covering some 2.3 million tons of hazardous waste. A rock dam surrounds the radioactive waste to control runoff water that flows into nearby Moenkopi Wash.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found well water to be undrinkable in at least 22 Diné communities. According to the EPA, “Approximately 30 percent of the Navajo population does not have access to a public drinking water system and may be using unregulated water sources with uranium contamination.” Uranium exposure is a known cause of cancers, organ damage, miscarriages and birth defects.

Flocks of sheep and other livestock still graze among radioactive tailing piles and ingest radioactive water.

According to the Diné Nation, every year up to 2.5 million gallons of uranium-contaminated water leaches out of the Shiprock Uranium Mill near Shiprock, N.M., into the San Juan River, a tributary to the Colorado River. In July 1979 near the small Diné town

of Church Rock, N.M., a dirt dam breached at the nearby uranium mine and processing site, releasing more than 1,100 tons of radioactive waste and nearly 100 million gallons of contaminated fluid into the Rio Puerco (which ultimately flows into the Colorado River) — marking the largest nuclear accident in U.S. history. More than 875,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste continue to contaminate the land.

In 2005, the Diné Nation government banned uranium mining and processing within its 27,000-square miles of land.

That’s why thousands of Diné residents near Church Rock were outraged in early March when the Federal 10th Circuit Court of Appeals voted to uphold a Nuclear Regulatory Commission license to allow Hydro Resources, Inc., to engage in uranium mining operations in the area, dangerously close to the aquifer that provides water for 15,000 Diné residents.

“Because the majority’s decision in this case will unnecessarily and unjustifiably compromise the health and safety of the people who currently live within and immediately downwind. ... I must respectfully dissent,” wrote Judge Carlos F. Lucero in the minority opinion.

“The Navajo [Diné] communities ... are demanding that they [the mining companies] stay off of Navajo lands,” wrote the New Mexico Environmental Law Center in a March 9 press release. “This court setback is even more devastating now that the nuclear industry ramps up its lobbying campaign to gain access to stimulus funds for construction of new nuclear plants. ... It’s critical to look at the entire nuclear fuel chain.”

A PLACE FOR WASTE

Today, the United States has more than 75,000 metric tons of highly radioactive spent nuclear waste stored in concrete dams at nuclear power plants throughout the country. The waste increases at a rate of 2,000 tons per year.

In 1987, Congress initiated a controversial project to transport and ultimately store 135,000 metric tons of waste at Yucca Moun-

tain, located about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The project would have involved shipping the radioactive waste via rails and highways starting in 2020.

In February 2009, Obama met his campaign promise to cut funding for the multi-billion dollar Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository project and asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to withdraw the license application.

Yucca Mountain is considered holy by the Paiute and Western Shoshone Nations. Western Shoshone lands, were never ceded to the U.S. government and have long been under attack by the military and nuclear industry. Between 1951 and 1992, more than 1,000 nuclear bombs were detonated above and below the surface at an area called the Nevada Test Site on Western Shoshone lands, making it one of the most bombed nations on earth. Communities around the test site faced exposure to radioactive fallout which has caused cancers, leukemia and other illnesses. The late Western Shoshone spiritual practitioner Corbin Harney helped initiate a grassroots effort to shut down the test site and abolish nuclear weapons.

In February, a new proposal for Yucca Mountain threatens to further desecrate the sacred mountain on Western Shoshone lands. Several Republican candidates for governor in Nevada have expressed support for using the area as an experimental “reprocessing” site, where radioactive waste would be reprocessed to extract additional fuel.

GRASSROOTS DIRECT ACTION

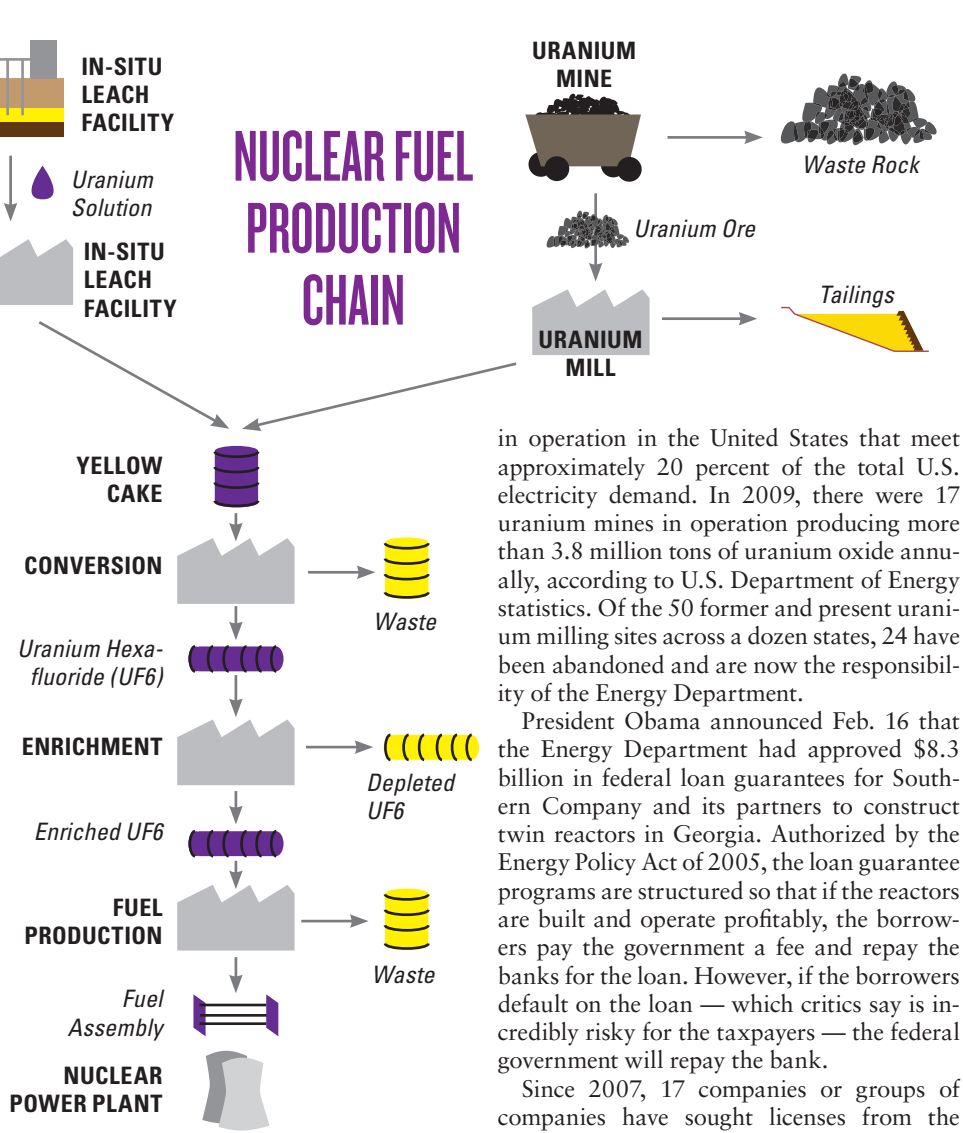
The Southwest also has a legacy of resistance to the onslaught of mining interests. In March 1988, more than 8,000 people converged for massive 10-day direct action to “reclaim” the Nevada Test Site, and nearly 3,000 people were arrested. Groups such as the Nevada



UNDRINKABLE: Local anti-uranium mining advocates rallied at the Grand Canyon Aug. 16 when President Barack Obama visited the site with his family. PHOTO: BRENDA NORELL/CENSORED NEWS

Desert Experience and Shundahai Network continue their work to shut down the test site and resist the corporate and military nuclear industry.

Throughout the 1980s, a fierce movement of grassroots organizing and direct action against uranium mining near the Grand Canyon had taken shape, galvanized by the Havasupai, Hopi, Diné, Hualapai tribes and a Flagstaff group, Canyon Under Siege. Prayerful and strategic meetings were held once a year throughout the 1980s. In 1989, five individuals were charged for eco-actions including cutting powerlines to the Canyon Uranium Mine. Partly due to the resistance, but mainly because of a sharp drop in the price



in operation in the United States that meet approximately 20 percent of the total U.S. electricity demand. In 2009, there were 17 uranium mines in operation producing more than 3.8 million tons of uranium oxide annually, according to U.S. Department of Energy statistics. Of the 50 former and present uranium milling sites across a dozen states, 24 have been abandoned and are now the responsibility of the Energy Department.

President Obama announced Feb. 16 that the Energy Department had approved \$8.3 billion in federal loan guarantees for Southern Company and its partners to construct twin reactors in Georgia. Authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the loan guarantee programs are structured so that if the reactors are built and operate profitably, the borrowers pay the government a fee and repay the banks for the loan. However, if the borrowers default on the loan — which critics say is incredibly risky for the taxpayers — the federal government will repay the bank.

Since 2007, 17 companies or groups of companies have sought licenses from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for 26 more reactors with plans to complete four by 2018 and up to eight by 2020. New reactors are estimated to cost more than \$12 billion each. The last nuclear power plant in the U.S. was built in 1977.

“The demand for the fuel will expand in the future, especially with the emphasis on control of greenhouse gases,” Arizona Mines Department Director Singh said. “There are 436 reactors in operation in the world; another 433 are in development or on the drawing boards. It is evident that the demand for uranium will be strong in the coming years.”

Obama said, “Nuclear energy remains our largest source of fuel that produces no carbon emissions.”

“Obama’s support for nuclear energy is misguided and destructive federal policy,” said Stacy Hamburg of the Grand Canyon chapter of the Sierra Club. “The nuclear energy cycle is destructive from start to end ... and is not the solution to climate change.”

According to *The Washington Post* March 22, a recent Gallup poll found that 62 percent of adults surveyed said they favored nuclear energy as one way to meet national electricity needs — the highest level of support reported by Gallup.

Although nuclear energy is being touted as a solution to the current U.S. energy crisis and global warming, those more closely affected by uranium mining, transportation, processing and dumping of waste recognize the true environmental costs.

“There are six licensed commercial nuclear reactors in New York,” Hamburg said. “It is critical for people in New York City, as well as nation- and world-wide, to understand how mining uranium, possibly destined for one of these six reactors, devastates indigenous communities throughout the Southwest.”

This article was adapted from an article written by Klee Benally. Jessica Lee revised the article and provided additional research with permission of the author. Klee Benally (Diné) is a collective member of Indigenous Action Media, on the Board of Directors of the Shundahai Network and is a musician with the group Blackfire.

world briefs

IRAQI ELECTION SHIFTS POWER

Millions of Iraqis cast ballots on March 7 in the second full parliamentary election since the U.S.-led invasion, and ahead of the planned withdrawal of most U.S. military forces later this year. The secular Iraqiya coalition, led by former U.S.-installed prime minister Iyad Allawi, won the most seats, beating the incumbent Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law party. The largest bloc of elected members will choose the prime minister, so now the two parties are trying to unite with the Kurds, or with the Iraqi National Alliance, a coalition of mostly religious Shia groups that had a strong showing in the election and is dominated by the anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.



GREEKS RESIST WIDESPREAD CUTS

Nationwide strikes and protests shut down Greece in March after the debt-ridden government imposed harsh austerity measures. The cuts total more than \$20 billion, and slash civil servants' wages, freeze their pensions and raise taxes. At one point, workers occupied the printing presses to stop the publication of the austerity measures. Public transportation came to a halt during two 24-hour general strikes, and an estimated 100,000 people demonstrated in Athens. Unions say workers and average Greek citizens are being forced to pay for the government's fiscal mismanagement, and they've vowed ongoing resistance to the cutbacks.

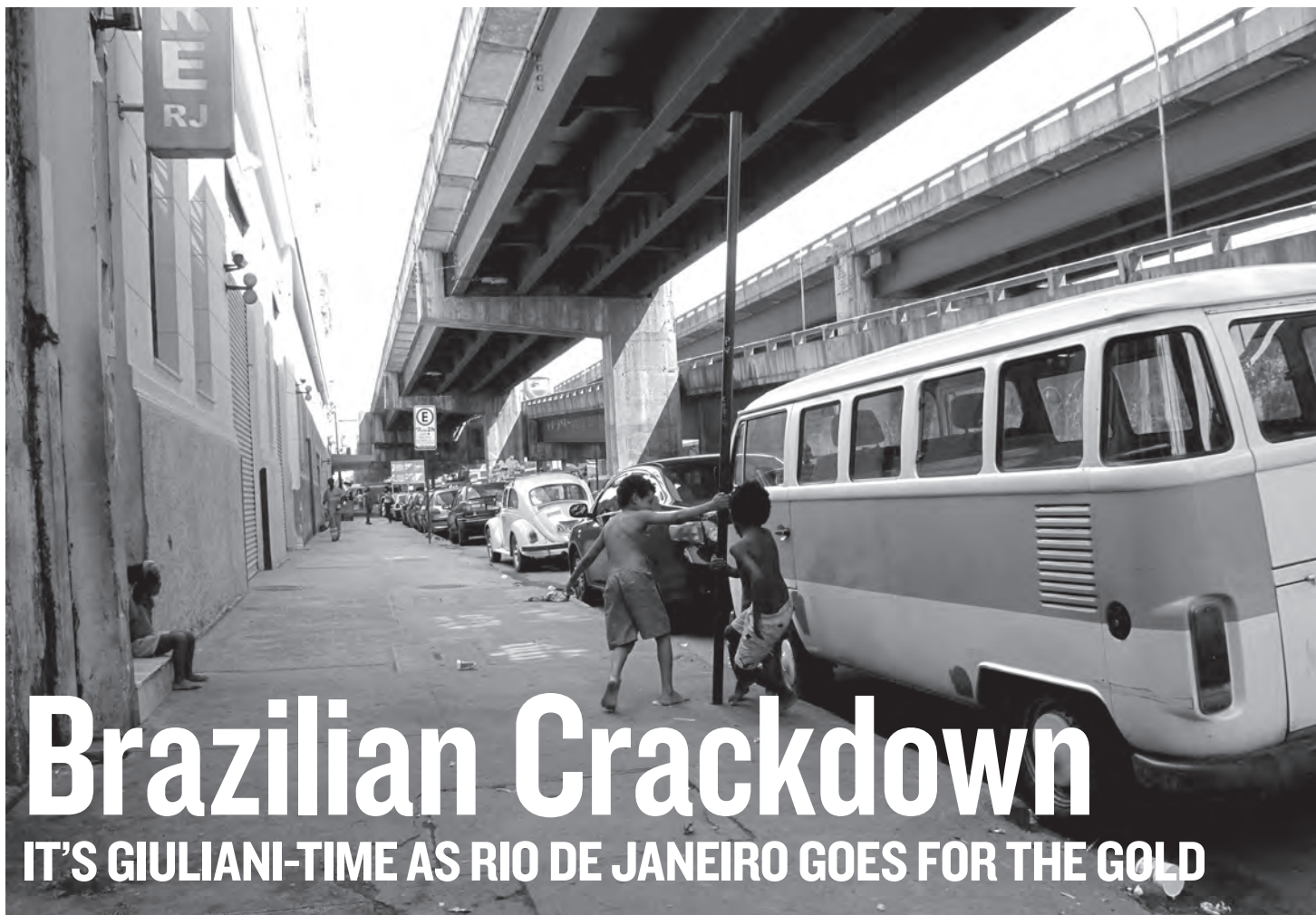
SORRY, CHARLIE

Trade trumped concern for threatened marine species at a recent meeting in Doha, Qatar, of the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Inter Press Service News Agency reports the convention failed to pass a measure to protect the Atlantic bluefin tuna and eight species of shark. Much of the blame was put on Japan, where a single bluefin tuna can fetch \$100,000, and China, where shark fin soup is a highly prized delicacy. "Some countries may not want to have commercially traded fish species listed on CITES because they are huge importers of fish," said Karen Sack, deputy director of international marine campaigns at Pew Environmental Group. "But... they are going to quickly need to change the way they act or our plates and our oceans will all be empty."

ASSASSINATED HUMAN RIGHTS LEADER REMEMBERED

El Salvador's government has held its first public commemoration of the assassination of Archbishop Óscar Romero on the 30th anniversary of his death. An outspoken advocate for the poor, Romero was shot on March 24, 1980, while he celebrated mass, shortly after he gave a sermon calling on soldiers to stop violating human rights. The assassins were part of a U.S.-backed right-wing death squad. Salvadorean President Mauricio Funes offered an official state apology for the murder, saying the killers "unfortunately acted with the protection, collaboration or participation of state agents." Thousands marched by the chapel where Romero was killed, chanting one of his famous comments: "They can kill me, but they will never kill justice."

INTERNATIONAL



Brazilian Crackdown

IT'S GIULIANI-TIME AS RIO DE JANEIRO GOES FOR THE GOLD

STREET LIFE: Children play beneath a freeway overpass near Mauá Pier in Rio de Janeiro's Centro neighborhood. PHOTO: KRISTOFER RÍOS

BY KRISTOFER RÍOS

Ever since Rio de Janeiro learned it would host the 2016 Olympics, police have begun shutting down colorfully painted street vendor stands that line the city's famous beaches. Vendors are told that in order to regain their livelihoods they must apply for and secure a license. If they're allowed to return, they'll have to operate out of a generic white tent.

Sound familiar? The crackdown is part of Rio's "Shock of Order" campaign, modeled after a "cleanup" of New York City street vendors in the 1990s by former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani (see sidebar below).

Rio signed a contract in December with Giuliani's global security firm to help stamp out crime in the lead-up to the 2016 Summer Olympic Games and 2014 World Cup. The city expects to spend an estimated \$14 billion on security and infrastructure upgrades. But the impoverished residents of Rio's *favelas* expect mostly shock, and little order.

"Before, poor people could at least have their business by the coast, selling things on the street. Now they can't," said Wagner Dutra, who grew up in one of the dozens of shantytowns on the outskirts of Rio.

A statement from Rio's secretary of public

order says the Shock of Order campaign aims to "end decades of omission of public policy in questions that most afflict the public." But Dutra, who now lives in New York, says the government must change how it treats people in *favelas* before any meaningful change will happen. "If you want to talk about giving people human rights, you have to treat people humanely first," he said.

This concern was echoed in March when Rio hosted the United Nations' 5th World Urban Forum. "Big events like the Olympics and the World Cup can be an opportunity ... to mobilize investment into the city's slums," said Raquel Rolnik, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and a city planning professor at the University of São Paul in Brazil. "But unfortunately, the dominant approach we have seen with mega-events is that they are part of the machinery of the territorial exclusion of the poor."

Just a mile away from where the forum was held, *favelas* crowd nearly every inch of the city's surrounding mountainsides, filled with red brick shacks topped by tin roofs. In the summer, heavy rains bring mudslides that destroy the cheap homes and kill residents.

Many residents feel the government is more invested in displacing or hiding them than in improving their lives. The Shock of Order cam-

paign has sent police into the *favelas* to destroy structures built without a permit. Construction has already begun on concrete walls to contain 19 slums; the barriers will displace 550 houses and run along the major highway from the international airport into the city.

"When the Olympics is over, everything will be over. There will be no difference," stressed Elza Santiago, a resident of Morro da Coroa, a *favela* that has not had electricity since December. "Our people don't have water. We're walking up the hill to our *favelas* with water because we don't have any. No one is talking about the Olympics, *that* is our Olympics."

Santiago is a member of *Os Mulheres Bordadeiras da Coroa*, a women's cooperative that sells handcrafted goods to raise funds for education programs offered to women and children living in their neighborhood. She was invited to speak at the U.N. forum, but she believes that academics, organizers and city government officials are more interested in talking about the issues than actually solving them.

"People come to our city and no one sees the misery, the hunger, the degradation, the destruction of our children, the corruption, and drugs," Santiago explained in frustration. "I want basics. I want education, food, light, water."



Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani got into the lucrative security consulting business three months after the 9/11 attacks. Since then his firm, Giuliani Partners LLC, has earned about \$40 million in annual revenue. But Giuliani gained a reputation for imposing social order much earlier in his mayoral career. During the 1990s, he adapted a "zero-tolerance" policing policy based on the theory that cracking down on minor legal infractions would prevent violent crime as well.

Under the rubric of improving "quality of life," Giuliani arrested graffiti artists and panhandlers like the "squeegee men" who cleaned windshields in exchange for payment. But the cornerstone of his campaign was criminalizing street vendors. He began by tar-

geting food vendors who worked in the downtown area and then tried to expand the ban to 144 streets across the city, pushing the vendors into open-air markets in abandoned lots far from heavy pedestrian traffic. At one point hot dog sellers went on strike, gathering their carts near City Hall with the message, "Bite me, Rudy."

Tension from this campaign collided with an atmosphere of racial intolerance caused by expanded "random" stop-and-frisk tactics by police against young black men. In 1999, four NYPD police officers gunned down 23-year-old Amadou Diallo, a vendor from Guinea who sold hats and gloves, after they mistook his wallet for a weapon.

Critics say Giuliani took credit for falling crime rates that were really due to causes beyond local policy and had

already begun to fall prior to his administration. But this didn't stop him from using his reputation to score a \$4 million dollar consulting fee with Mexico City in 2004. He presented the local government with a widely-criticized crime-fighting project that targeted street vendors, panhandlers and... squeegee men, prompting one man to ask the *Seattle Times*, "Why isn't Señor Giuliani picking on the real criminals instead of people trying to earn enough to eat?"

Now Giuliani is staying on message in Rio de Janeiro. He visited the *favelas* in December after contracting with the city to improve security ahead of the 2016 Olympics, telling reporters, "You have to pay attention to big and small things."

— RENÉE FELTZ

CETACEAN NATION:

Ocean Warriors Fight for Endangered Whales

BY WIETSE VAN DER WERF

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society cruised into Hobart, Australia, in early March from an ambitious anti-whaling campaign in the Southern Ocean. In this isolated part of the world with the Antarctic ice and rock as its backdrop, a fierce battle is being waged to stop Japanese whale hunters from poaching hundreds of piked whales and endangered fin whales inside the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary.

In recent years, the Sea Shepherd fleet has left politics on land to engage in direct action on the high seas — putting the enforcement of conservation laws into the hands of a few bold activists who sabotage hunts by putting themselves in the line of fire. This has decreased the number of whales harvested, and in turn, cut into the whalers' profits. It's no surprise that poachers are now willing to go to extremes defending their lucrative operations.

In December, I joined an international crew of volunteers on the Sea Shepherd's flagship, the *Steve Irwin*, and we headed south. With a newly acquired trimaran and a third vessel lurking in a secret location, the anti-whaling fleet was stronger than ever.

Commercial whaling was banned by a global moratorium in 1986. However, the Japanese exploit a loophole in International Whaling Commission regulations that allows a limited number of whales to be killed for scientific research. Japan harvests nearly 1,000 whales every year — primarily minke whales. On top of that, whales are also harvested in a sanctuary established by the United Nations within the Antarctic Treaty Zone.

On Jan. 5, after a month at sea, the crew on the trimaran (named *Ady Gil* after its donor) located the whaling fleet and immediately approached them from the south. Our ship pushed

ahead at full speed from the north. Our secret third vessel, the *Bob Barker*, came in from the west; it had been at sea for more than a month, trying to reach the whaling grounds to join in on the action. With ships approaching from all directions, there were few places the whalers could run.

This stand-off lasted several hours — until the Japanese decided to retaliate. The 800-ton harpoon ship, *Shonan Maru 2*, closed in at a fast speed and rammed the 14-ton *Ady Gil*, tearing apart its hull. As the ship started to sink, the crew successfully evacuated to another one of our ships. After the ramming, all the whaling ships ignored the *Ady Gil*'s distress signal and disappeared over the horizon to resume whaling.

Although one vessel short, we weren't prepared to give in. We continued the campaign, but it took another month before we located the whaling fleet again.

Having returned to Australia for refueling, we were well stocked and able to stick behind the factory ship *Nisshin Maru* for a while. The whalers rely on the slipway of this floating abattoir to haul the whales on board for processing, making this the most effective place to shut them down. For three weeks in February we escorted the factory ship and stood watch at its slipway. From the moment we were with them, Sea Shepherd's Captain Paul Watson made it clear that if they were to attempt to transfer a whale, collisions would be inevitable. No whaling took place for nearly a month.

Ady Gil Captain Pete Bethune believed diplomacy was not going to get him justice after the collision, which he considered deliberate and which endangered the life of his crew and destroyed his \$3 million vessel. In a "mission impossible," he left under the dark of night on a small jet ski on Feb. 15 and secretly boarded the *Shonan Maru 2* in an attempt to make a citizen's arrest of its captain. The captain of the *Shonan Maru* refused and instead detained Bethune, forcing New Zealand




KEVIN WALLACE

and Japanese officials to meet and discuss the situation in the days following the boarding. Bethune was taken back to Japan and arrested on March 12, charged with "vessel invasion."

Meanwhile, the International Whaling Commission is considering a new proposal to allow the resumption of commercial whaling — in effect lifting the global moratorium that has attempted to limit commercial whaling for the last 25 years. The new plan would allow for "regulated hunts" while ending whaling in the Southern Ocean. The proposal will be discussed at the next commission meeting in Agadir, Morocco, later this year.

For the Sea Shepherd crew one thing is clear: the battle to save the great whales is far from over.

For more information, seashepherd.org.



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Documentary Brings Anti-Apartheid Movement to Life

By ERIC STONER

In 1996, only two years after Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa, acclaimed filmmaker Connie Field began working on an epic seven-part documentary series about the global campaign to end the racist apartheid regime that plagued the country for more than four decades.

Have You Heard From Johannesburg chronicles three generations of that struggle — from the early freedom fighters and African National Congress (ANC) leader Oliver Tambo to the international campaign to boycott corporations operating in South Africa and impose economic sanctions on the regime — through some 135 interviews spanning 12 countries, encounters with former apartheid officials and profiteering corporate executives, and archival footage from around the world.

After attending a recent screening at the Ford Foundation of one part of the eight-and-a-half-hour series, *The Indypendent's* Eric Stoner spoke with Field about whether nonviolent action played the decisive role in bringing down the apartheid regime, why economic justice has eluded post-apartheid South Africa, and what activists today can learn from the anti-apartheid movement.

ERIC STONER: Tell me a bit about how the story developed.

CONNIE FIELD: This is an untold story that didn't exist in any medium. When I started, I had very little information about it. It was a huge process just gathering the story from all over the world, like doing original historical research.

ES: I understand certain parts of the series can be viewed separately?

CF: Three of the stories I call stand-alones. They are about specific campaigns that were waged from outside of South Africa to help topple apartheid there. Viewed individually, each tells the story of a particular campaign. One of them, *From Selma to Soweto*, shows how African-Americans changed U.S. foreign policy in South Africa for the first time in history. Countries that were more heavily involved in the Cold War or had serious economic interests in the system of apartheid, such as Britain and the United States, were steadfastly "protecting" the regime by not acting against it. So when people in our country literally forced the government to enact sanctions against South Africa over President Reagan's veto, it was incredibly significant. The resistance within South Africa really relied on support from the United States. The other two stand-alones are

about the sports boycott and the economic boycott that forced companies to pull out of South Africa.

ES: What will viewers get by watching the entire series that would be missing if they only watched individual parts?

CF: One of the features has been in distribution for a couple of years and I've been various places with it. What I learned from those screenings is that these powerful stories have to be put into context. The whole story is what gives these separate parts their significance; that's why I was very happy with Film Forum wanting to show *Have You Heard* in its entirety.

ES: How did the international campaign and the very effective boycott by blacks inside South Africa work together to end the system of apartheid?

CF: It's very important to understand that this story worked because of the combination of people inside South Africa working together with people outside the country. What the outside movements helped accomplish was the isolation the apartheid regime so that it would negotiate. With that external pressure and the uprising within South Africa, the government was faced with a revolution or doing something to save themselves.



ES: While the anti-apartheid struggle was primarily nonviolent, the ANC did resort to violence. Would you say that violence or nonviolence was more influential in bringing down the regime?

CF: The ANC had an armed wing, and in the 1980s they certainly stepped up the amount of force they were using, but it wasn't tremendously effective. It was really the nonviolent mass movement that was happening in the 1980s, which by then was huge and unstoppable. Violence didn't really change anything.

ES: What lessons do you think activists today can take from the anti-apartheid movement?

CF: Many of the tactics that were used proved capable of affecting things on a global scale. Pressuring international corporations that continued to operate in South Africa was essential, and the resistance movement did that quite successfully. To understand that you can affect what corporations do is tremendously important, because corporations control our universe. And for people who are struggling in their countries for their rights, understanding how the ANC went about gaining the kind of international support it had provides a tremendous lesson.

ES: Since the movement built up over decades, I was reminded of the importance of perseverance.

CF: You have to be in for the long haul if you want to change anything. The ANC was formed in the early 1900s and their struggle went on for almost a century. W.E.B. DuBois said that the last century was about race and the issue of the "color line," and it's true. The whole world progressed from fighting off colonialism to the civil rights movements, including in our own country, and that entire century culminated in the defeat of apartheid in South Africa. Now people are very committed and concerned with trying to eradicate poverty. That's going to be a big global struggle that will take us through the next century. But it doesn't mean it can't be done.

ES: For decades the ANC had a very progressive economic platform, including advocating the nationalization of certain industries. Then during the transition, they caved on many of these issues. How did this happen and what has been the effect of this reversal on economic policy?

CF: Yeah, that's very true. Had the Soviet Union not imploded there would have been a much stronger influence by the communists and socialists in the ANC, of which

there were a huge amount.

In the end many of them got bought off. Throughout the later half of the 1980s, there were meetings going on all over the world between the big corporations and ANC leaders that made some of the foremost revolutionaries of the ANC into millionaires. Everybody knew that the ANC was probably going to govern post-apartheid South Africa; they all wanted to protect their interests.

ES: I felt empowered by the film and I hope that it encourages others to get involved in current struggles for social justice.

CF: That's why I thought it was such an important story to tell. It's a victory achieved by people all over the world. I think the ANC led a brilliant liberation movement that we can learn a lot from. When you don't know what your history is, you don't know what your possibilities are either. As Howard Zinn taught us, the people's history often goes untold. This was a global story of people's history that I thought needed to be told so that people can get a sense of what can be accomplished.

Have You Heard From Johannesburg will be shown at the Film Forum in its entirety April 14-27. For more information, filmforum.org.

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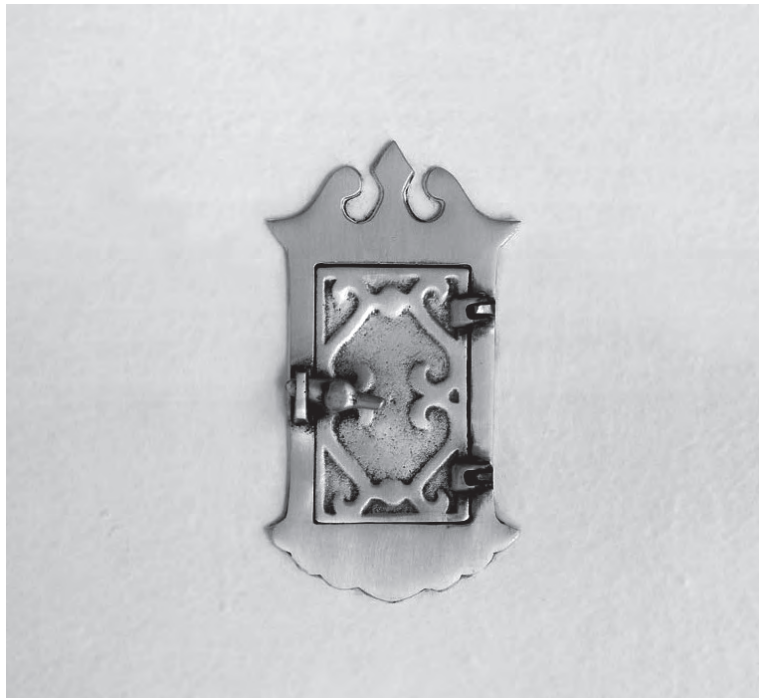
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LIARS DELIVER A MUSICAL RORSCHACH

Sisterworld
LIARS
MUTE RECORDS, 2010



Liars are to hardcore music what Hitchcock is to the horror genre: proof that our darkest aspects are most brilliantly illuminated with a minimum of bombast or splatter. Carnage comes only in controlled, powerful bursts. Familiar instruments are repurposed and given uncanny inner life; energies shift in violent microseconds. Liars put us on uneven ground with seismic shockwaves of guitar and drums warped to sound like thunder from another planet. They create vivid, textural worlds, not famously hospitable ones.

It's been a whirlwind decade for Liars. While The Strokes were being hailed as new rock messiahs with their downtown retro-pop, Liars irrupted onto New York City's dance-punk scene in 2001 with their acclaimed debut *They Threw Us All in a Trench and Stuck a Monument on Top*. Critics celebrated the record's post-punk revival, but spurning the early hype, Liars followed with EPs that dispensed with catchy rhythms in favor of heavy, experimental percussion; and the four-piece band slimmed down to a three-piece outfit: Angus Andrew on guitar and vocals; Aaron Hemphill on percussion, guitar and synth; and drummer Julian Gross.

The result was the acclaimed 2004 release *They Were Wrong, So We Drowned*, a challenging record inspired by stories of real-life witch trials. It may have alienated the band's original fans, but the result was a high-concept record with harsh, unspooling atmospherics. They followed with *Drum's Not Dead*, a product of time spent tinkering with electrified percussion in Berlin. Its wilting, ambient closing track, "The Other Side of Mt. Heart Attack," is arguably the most beautiful music Liars have achieved to date. 2007 saw them pull all this experimentation into an uncanny pop template on *Liars*, their most accessible offering — not quite a return to form, but certainly a return to greasy, unambiguous rock.

Stylistic zigzags notwithstanding, Liars' music has always come with a caveat: the dividing line between earnestness and pretentiousness can be difficult to draw. Undeniably smart compositions

minge with obscure references and challenges to the underground establishment. But who would call their bluff on music so abrasive and self-assured? Liars' most impressive achievement, I submit, is in becoming a musical Rorschach test, delivering music that provokes deeply subjective gut reactions. Exactly how they have advanced the art of noise, though, is a matter of unsettled debate.

Sisterworld, their fifth full-length album, opens on a haunted plain in "Scissor," which advances with a troubling cello dirge before swerving into shredding math-rock. The emphasis on turbulence over continuity won't faze their following, but newcomers may experience whiplash. The carnivalesque "No Barrier Fun" sets the tone for the Weimar-era piano and strings of "Here Comes The People," an early highlight that slides into an industrial drone on "Drip." That tension is banished by "Scarecrows on a Killer Slant," with distorted guitar storming over descriptions of urban execution that are chanted like orders.

The result is too visceral to shake, and it contrasts sharply with *Sisterworld's* otherwise nakedly atmospheric and anti-structural tracks. Along with "Scarecrows," only "Proud Evolution," with its motoric propulsion and sun-scoured delay effects, and the shimmering "Too Much, Too Much," featuring a strangely gentle bassoon, seem to be the same song at the end as they were at the beginning. More often on *Sisterworld*, moods of slow decay are set and aggressively upended: "I Still Can See an Outside

World" is first a damaged lullaby, then that lullaby's doom-metal inversion. The brassy death-march "Goodnight Everything" is less successful, insidious more than affecting; and much like *Sisterworld* as a whole, it works best in its exoskeletal first act, where heavy ambient hollows are sustained at the center of a thin, peeling layer of sound.

Because Liars are restless, inventive heavyweights, it's fair to ask where *Sisterworld* fits in their schizophrenic oeuvre, and within the messy arc of experimental rock at large. What demands admiration is that within this fractured genre — one that shares postmodern literature's penchant for virtuosic games that keep audiences at a cold distance — Liars cannot be written off as frigid. Their attack is as much physical as mental, empathetic as well as merciless — often all at once. They will assuredly live on as an uncompromising cult act. *Sisterworld*, though, is more likely to fall through the cracks, reminding us that Liars occasionally serve up more bark than bite, offering scant coherence or commentary. Which may be the point. Yet even on that obscurantist front, *Sisterworld* is a mixed bag, mired in soundscaping that feels modest and weak amid a repertoire of ambitious projects like *We Were Wrong ...* and *Drum's Not Dead*. It's not without its nasty charms, of course, but *Sisterworld's* scraps of paranoia and netherworld might be more striking coming from a band without so many musical successes in its rearview mirror.

—MILES KLEE

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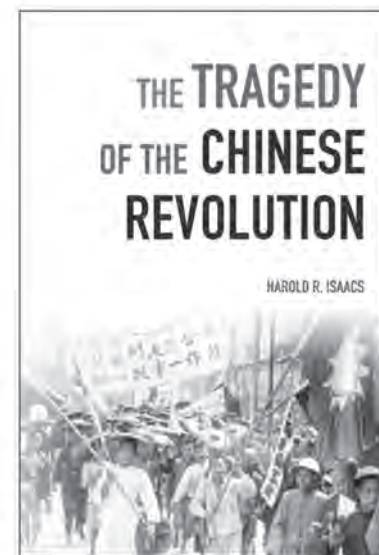
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BOOKS

*The Taming of the American Crowd:
From Stamp Riots to Shopping Sprees*
BY AL SANDINE
MONTHLY REVIEW PRESS, 2009

Corralling the Crowd

BY DAVE ENDERS

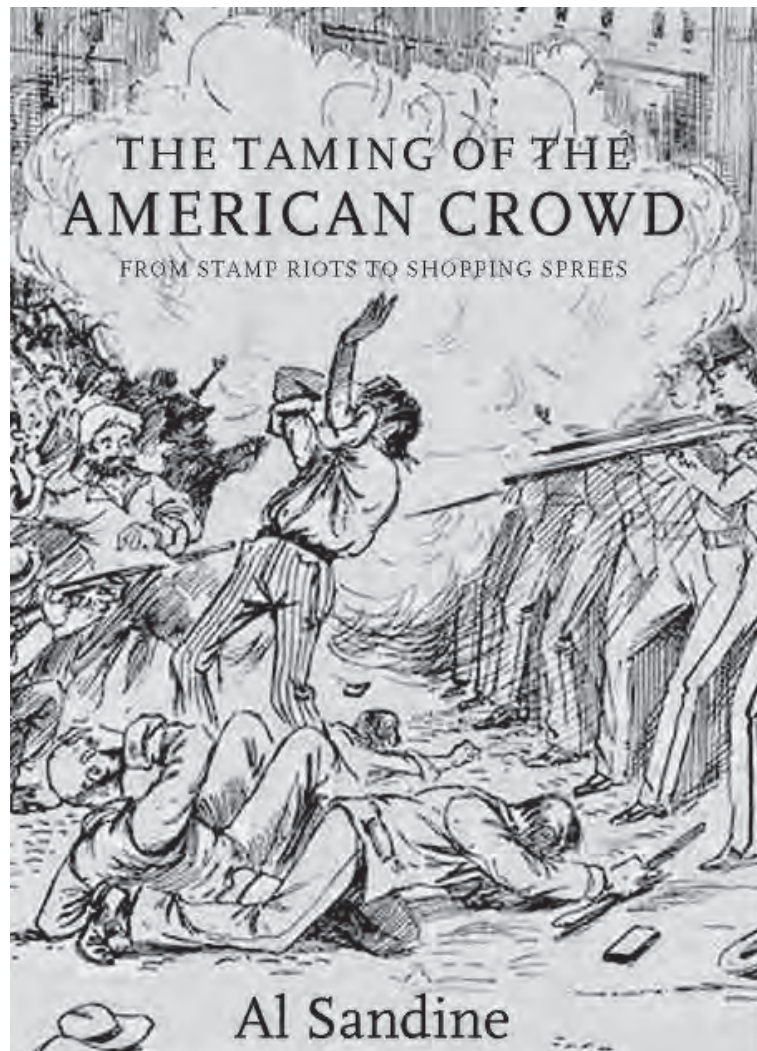
In the fall of 2002, I was part of a crowd in Washington, D.C., that consisted of around 1,000 demonstrators protesting U.S. policy in Colombia. Outside a Senate office building, the march splintered and shrank to a few hundred people, corralled into a park by nearly as many riot cops. I watched an officer shove protesters at the edge of the cordon, apparently trying to provoke them with the feeble claim that they had been standing in a flowerbed. The morning ended with dozens of arrests.

Those lackluster, divided marches prior to the Iraq War raise an important question about politics: what would it take for an American crowd to act with a decisive, collective purpose other than consumption? In *The Taming of the American Crowd: From Stamp Riots to Shopping Sprees*, Al Sandine investigates political culture in an attempt to understand why Americans are more likely to gather for acts of consumption than for any other act of ostensible or real self-interest.

Sandine builds on the work of sociologists like Eric Hobsbawm and Guy Rude, whose study of the crowds of the French Revolution may be the best-known work in the field of crowd studies — a field that is now largely the domain of marketers and economists. Like Hobsbawm and Rude, he wants to explain the makeup and motives of crowds, particularly emphasizing the distinction between a “crowd” and a “mob.” The two are not synonymous; a crowd has “the capacity for physical turmoil, whether or not it gets played out in action. A crowd is potentially turbulent. ... There is power in this turbulence,” he writes.

According to Sandine, the political potential of turbulence has largely been lost on modern American crowds, which are better described as disempowered mobs. Little resembling those of America’s past, crowds today represent obstacles to their members — the other drivers in traffic on the freeway, the moviegoers queuing up, shoppers fighting over the last sale item in a department store. Crowds have largely become self-selected, but not self-directed. Like many protests since 9/11, the route of the march in Washington was partially directed by plainclothes police officers operating inside the march.

While Hobsbawm saw Europe’s preindustrial food rioters as precursors to the crowds that would overthrow industrialized governments, Sandine identifies a sinister mutation in the makeup of American gatherings: the state management of potentially “dangerous,” motivated crowds and the thorough supervision of “safe” flocks



of spectators and consumers — a powerful detriment to democracy. In the short term, Sandine predicts that the event most likely to yield a self-directed crowd will be the next major American disaster. He cites the crowd after Hurricane Katrina, where residents trapped in the city were forced to rely on one another. We might also think of the days following Sept. 11, when collective action took place across lines of class; in New Orleans, Katrina’s greatest victims were primarily those without the means to leave before the storm or hire private security. But such non-consumer crowds are rare, and it’s discouraging that disasters appear to be one of the few catalysts to community building.

Writing on the subject of American crowd control in *Harper’s* in 2004, Lewis Lapham posited that Americans rise approximately once every three decades, citing the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, and the Civil Rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. Taking an account of the rollback of civil rights with the “war on terror” and the advent of the USA Patriot Act, Lapham mused, “Perhaps the Pentagon thinks we’re overdue.” The Pentagon’s paternalism squares with Sandine’s diagnosis of American political culture: rigorous state supervision of collective action indicates the threat that motivated crowds represent to state

power. Authorities control public space with preemptive shows of force, designations of “free speech zones,” “non-lethal” weaponry and bureaucratic obstacles.

Indeed, it’s hard to imagine American authorities meeting a crowd’s demands with concessions. Given that the U.S. occupation of the Philippines provided the model for America’s urban police forces, it’s not surprising that drone surveillance, biometrics and non-lethal crowd control techniques have already migrated back from the battlefield to the home front.

But how will we respond? Sandine’s research brings to mind George W. Bush’s call in the aftermath of 9/11 for people to “get down to DisneyWorld.” American crowds are deployed as passive herds of consumers. Appraising the developments of the digital age, Sandine sees the crowd as a medium for communication and reminds us that “people have to meet one-on-one. ... The disembodied realm of cyberspace is the very antithesis of a culture of crowds.”

Meanwhile, crowds in Iran, Greece and around the world are threatening existing power structures. Most Americans, if they are aware of such events at all, participate remotely and passively in the crowd they know best: a television audience.



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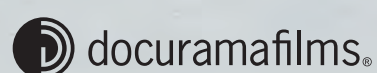
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